

# TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

## *Board of Finance*

36 Main Street \* P.O. Box 160  
Bethlehem, CT 06751-0160

February 19, 2013

Senator Toni Harp, Co-Chair  
Representative Toni Walker, Co-Chair  
Appropriations Committee  
Room 2700, Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106

re: Task Force to Study State  
Education Funding

Dear Senator Harp & Representative Walker,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony concerning the implementation of the Final report of the State Education Funding Task Force.

My name is Leonard Assard and I currently serve as the Chairman of the Bethlehem Board of Finance. I have served on that Board since 1987 and from 1977-1987 I served as First Selectman. I am also a past president of the Litchfield County Farm Bureau and currently serve on its Board of Directors.

As you may know Bethlehem is a member of Nonnewaug Regional School District #14, home of one of the best agriscience programs in the state if not the country.

The Task Force thoroughly investigated the Agriscience funding issue and unanimously made recommendations for funding the Agriscience program on an equal level with that of the non Scheff magnet schools. The Agriscience program can be considered to be the first magnet schools established years ago.

Agriscience programs are not just cows and tractors any more. These programs cover the gamut of agriculture in CT from aquaculture to zoology and everything in between including but not limited to animal science, biotechnology, horticulture, floriculture, meat science and veterinary science.

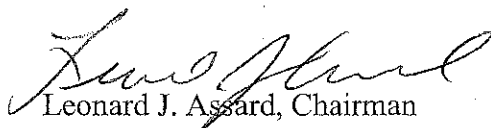
The students enrolled in these programs are well focused, secure in their future plans and dedicated. They are the future providers of food and fiber for the rest of us. They will be owners

of small businesses, educators, veterinarians and researchers of the future, and will help maintain the labor supply in one of Connecticut's few growing industries.

The implementation of the Task Force Recommendations will be beneficial to both the sending towns and host districts. It is a matter of providing equitable funding at a reasonable cost, especially when implemented in phases as recommended by the Task Force.

I ask and encourage you to include the implementation of the Task Force Report in the budget for FY 2013-2014 and beyond.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Leonard J. Assard".

Leonard J. Assard, Chairman  
Bethlehem Board of Finance

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